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Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-seventh session
3-14 March 2003
Item 3 (c) (ii) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: (ii) Women's human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Statement submitted by the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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As an international non-governmental organization whose members are in daily social service provision with women in 67 countries, the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd would like to submit the following regarding human rights and violence against women:

Our organization affirms the fundamental right of equality and dignity for women, the right of women to be free of violence. This right places obligations on States to ensure the fulfilment of Rights.

Given the many forms of violence of concern to this Commission, our organization seeks to highlight the harm and violence done to women in systems of prostitution.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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The condemnation of the prostitution of women is a contentious issue due the sovereignty of nations who have legalized prostitution. Likewise, those who profit from systems of the prostitution of women welcome silence on this issue. The international community has learned through processes of working towards the elimination of domestic violence, female genital mutilation, early marriage and other formerly legal, sanctioned and protected cultural or traditional practices, that no law, no culture, no tradition may deny the fulfilment of human rights. They apply and must be protected in all situations.

Prostitution is an issue of human rights of women. It is not a form of labour. It is a transformation of the human person into an economic commodity that exposes women and girls to assault, rape, HIV/AIDS, chronic health problems, kidnapping, torture, murder, and trafficking. Prostitution severely limits the human person. There is no regulation of prostitution that can ensure freedom from the abuse, violence and harm done to women.

NGOs that provide social services know that the external factors identified by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report on trafficking in women and girls (A/55/322) that encourage human trafficking also apply as factors that condemn women to all forms of violence, including becoming victims of systems of prostitution. Those factors identified in paragraph 50 of the report are "poverty and discrimination and inequality which prevent women from exercising control over their lives." The prostitution of women is an inevitable reality resultant from the structural inequality of women.

Members of our organization express the situation of women in prostitution this way:

A Sister who accompanies women on the streets in Belfast says that, in the last year, two women in her neighbourhood were murdered. Beatings of women are frequent; one woman is now paralysed, another unconscious. Stabbings and drug usage are a part of the scene ...

A Sister from India says that the gap between women and girls and general society is growing wider. Both local and global efforts are required to bridge the gap. Breakdown in relationships in family, lack of service provision in schools and health agencies, poor implementation of existing laws serve to alienate women and girls. Thus, their lives centre on survival, and they are vulnerable to further exploitation of trafficking or prostitution.

A Sister from Latin America pleads: "Our girls are violated without voice and without future. Who takes the responsibility for the trauma done to these girls? Who will call for justice?"

We call upon the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session to continue the work of Beijing and of Beijing+5. Since the Beijing Platform for Action, Governments were to "take appropriate measures to address the root factors, including external factors that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution and other forms of commercialized sex" (A/55/322, para. 18). We therefore emphasize the necessity of maintaining the principles of the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. We reaffirm the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in

Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Additionally, we take exception to the International Labour Organization Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999, specifically No. 182, that categorizes the trafficking of children for prostitution as a form of labour, albeit, a worst form. While Convention No. 182 is undoubtedly well intentioned, we believe it is important to state that the trafficking of children for prostitution is more appropriately referred to as a violation of human rights than as a labour violation. We seek to use the good work of the United Nations to change the stark and violent reality that so many women face on a daily basis. We seek to support the work of this Commission in upholding the rights of women to self-determination, to access to universal human rights, and to oppose any tolerance of those who traffic in women and girls, who prostitute women and girls or who sexually exploit women or girls in any manner.

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Statement submitted by the International Council of Women, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The International Council of Women, which represents millions of women across the world, deems it a privilege to be partners with the United Nations and with the Commission on the Status of Women, in the determination to promote the well-being of women and their families.

Prevention of violence against women, human rights of women, the girl child, all are aspects of the one and the same issue — how are women perceived in the environments in which they live? Only too often, violence against women operates as a means to maintain and reinforce women's subordination.

Violence against women cannot be dealt with in isolation, but should be looked at in a holistic, integrated way, taking into consideration all factors which form the determinants of the status of women and those of the rights of human beings.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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The leading modern instrument on women's equal rights derived from the Universal Declaration, is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted in 1979 — which require respect for, and observance of human rights of women.

Member States assured the legal duty to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in civil, political, economic, social and cultural areas including health care and family planning, and to do so without delay.

But, the modern era of rights applied to women's well-being, began not in the past 27 years; it began with the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945, and in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights condemned discrimination on the grounds of sex.

How much longer, then will we talk about the problems which still face us in this century?

We recognize that women have acquired many rights. Much of the credit for achieving these rights goes to the United Nations and its conferences.

However, at the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly that followed, the 12 critical areas of concern in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action were reviewed. What did the data show?

It showed that:

- Violence against women ranked as high as cancer for killing and incapacitating women of childbearing age
- At least 20 per cent of women have been physically or sexually assaulted
- Out of close to 900 million illiterates in the world, two thirds are women
- Of the 1.3 billion poor, 70 per cent are women
- 120 million women have undergone female genital mutilation and 2 million women are at risk of undergoing this practice, annually
- 2 million girls aged 5-15 are trafficked, sold or coerced into the commercial sex market each year

And the list is long.

NGOs have done well in raising awareness of issues and needs — the need to empower women and the need to erase gender disparities throughout the world.

We have not succeeded well enough in developing the appropriate structures and mechanisms to achieve the goals.

International human rights relevant to women's well-being are worth nothing in countries where there are no enforceable measures to make them effective.

What is lacking in our joint efforts is Governments' accountability to the United Nations.

The United Nations has a dual role to play:

1. To be the facilitator of the multisectoral, multifaceted efforts for change, and
2. To Monitor and control the outcomes.

Governments must prove to the United Nations that their policies in all developmental processes are based on the gender perspective, that they have legislated laws to safeguard women's rights, that they implemented these laws and that legal action is being taken against those who violate these laws.

Among its manifold roles, the United Nations should publish an annual report on its findings, to be circulated to all Member States and international NGOs.

Measuring the prevalence of violence is difficult, to a great extent because of underreporting — underreporting by the victims of violence because of the trauma, and due to shame, due to guilt feelings, due to fear of reprisal and punishment, and fear of stigma. In many societies, the victims of violence are punished as if they were to blame.

In spite of underreporting, there is sufficient evidence and data to be able to say that violence in general and violence against women at all ages in one form or another has become a pandemic, in all countries and in all societies.

The facts are that each year thousands of women throughout the world are tricked, forced, coerced into slavery and forced to work as prostitutes. Tens of millions of children have been forced to work in the sex market and each year 2 million additional girls aged 5-15 are brought into the sex market and kept there under violent inhuman conditions.

Trafficking in women is not only a form of human rights abuse, it should be declared an international crime, a criminal offense, not only in a few countries, but in all countries. The United Nations can take the initiative to break the networks in trafficking and establish appropriate mechanisms to penalize offenders. Governments that are Member States ought to prove to the United Nations that they have established such legislation and laws that are effective against trafficking, and that these laws have been implemented in practice.

Concomitantly with these actions, we have to think of the future.

In this regard, you, the Commission on the Status of Women and we, the NGOs together, must give priority to prevention — prevention of violence. To be effective, we have to begin with the young at a very early age — in crèches, in kindergartens, in schools, in high schools, vocational schools, community centres, the workplaces, everywhere, at all levels of civil societies — learn how to communicate, how to conduct a dialogue rather than engage in arguments, how to listen to one another, even if one does not agree, learn to respect one another, man or woman. If girls and boys are treated equally within the family, this is the best equal rights education that boys can receive as they grow up to be men, in their individual life, as in public life when they assume decision and policy-making positions.

When boys and girls see an example of mutual respect between their parents, they will act accordingly when they have spouses.

If boys and girls, at all levels of the educational system and in informal educational programmes will learn that they are not the same, they have special needs, but they have the same human rights, they might grow up to exercise mutual respect, to be tolerant to differences, to listen, to conduct dialogues and refrain from aggression and violence.

If we succeed in education, perhaps in the future there will not be the need to continue to talk about violence against women, trafficking in women, equality, equity and human rights.

We should involve the young in programmes for the young, begin with the smallest unit of society — the family, the rights and responsibilities of each member of the family, mutual respect between spouses, parents and children and children and grandparents.

The promotion of the status of women and equality between men and women, cannot be achieved by treating women and men identically.

Identical treatment ignores women's and men's different social realities and gender roles.

When policy makers introduce measures to address socio-economic issues, humanitarian issues, health, the elderly, the handicapped, etc., they often fail to take account of the differences resulting from gender.

Therefore, in all educational programmes, the proposed standard of equality, based on a reconsideration and re-conceptualization of "equality" from a gender perspective, should be taken into consideration.

This perspective, takes into consideration the differences between women and men, their roles and responsibilities, in policy analysis, evaluation, planning and decision-making.

One cannot ignore the role of the media in influencing attitudes, behaviours and perceptions. How are women portrayed in the media and advertisement if not as a sex object? Where do youngsters see violence if not on television and movies? Yes, "the right to choose" is a fine slogan, but are young minds and emotions mature enough to be able to choose?

The Commission on the Status of Women is to be commended for placing the issue of women's access to the media on the agenda at this session. It may also wish to study further the effect on young people of violence in the media and on the Internet.

In conclusion, we call upon all NGOs present here to join the International Council of Women and together to fight the vice of trafficking in women, children and adolescents and that of violence whether it is directed against children, adolescents, adults or the elderly.

And last, we must not forget humanism and the spiritual dimension.

Each nation, each people, must identify those values in its respective culture and tradition that can be transmitted to the young in order that them may grow up to be good human beings.

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Statement submitted by Human Rights Advocates, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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The problem of demand for trafficked women and children and the role of military and United Nations peacekeeping troops in the exploitation of women and children

1. This statement addresses the issue of trafficking in persons and in particular, the issue of demand, the problem with exploitation of women and children by United Nations peacekeeping troops, and the need for education at local levels. Every country in the world is affected by this problem, as virtually every country is either a country of origin, transit or destination for these victims. The importance of this issue is highlighted in Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). It calls for full prosecution of crimes against women, increased protection of women and girls

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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during war, more women appointed to peacekeeping missions and involved in the decision-making process at all levels. Furthermore, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, introduced at the December 2000 United Nations conference in Palermo, Italy, signed by 80 of the 121 countries attending the conference and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/25, emphasizes the critical nature of this growing problem. Trafficking in persons is the third largest source of profits for organized crime, behind only drugs and guns, generating billions of dollars annually.[1]

The problem of demand

2. Though trafficking is driven by both supply and demand, there has been excessive emphasis on the issue of supply. Reducing demand is crucial to any strategy to reduce trafficking in persons. In destination countries, the demand for trafficked persons has increased over the past several decades. This demand has maintained a lucrative business for those who profit from the exploitation of trafficked victims. Trafficking does not require large capital investment, it involves little risk of discovery by law enforcement (and sometimes corrupt local officials are actually complicit in trafficking or turn a blind eye) and, unlike drugs, trafficked victims can be resold and used repeatedly by traffickers.[2]

3. Though poverty and gender inequality make it easier for traffickers to procure young women and children, the buying power of the consumer is the driving force behind the success of the industry. As long as demand remains strong, vulnerable populations will continue to be exploited.[3]

4. Trafficked women generally do not voluntarily enter prostitution. They are most often tricked into the sex industry and coerced into staying. Traffickers often move victims from their home communities to other areas — either within their country but in some remote area, or to foreign countries — where the victim is isolated and may be unable to speak the language or be unfamiliar with the culture. Trafficking victims are acquired in various ways. Sometimes they are kidnapped outright and taken forcibly to another country. Other times they are lured with job offers and false promises of well-paying jobs.[4] Traffickers advertise in local newspapers offering these "good jobs" at high pay in exciting cities. They use fraudulent employment travel and model agencies to lure unsuspecting young women into their networks.[5]

5. Fear among customers of infection with HIV or AIDS leads traffickers to recruit younger girls, some as young as seven, erroneously perceived by customers to be too young to be infected.[6] This past year, at least 700,000 and possibly as many as four million women and children worldwide were bought, sold, and held

[1] Miko, Francis T. and Grace Park, *Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response*, United States Department of State: Congressional Research Service Report 98-649 C, p. 3, May 2000.

[2] United States Department of State — Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, p. 2, 5 June 2002.

[3] Family Health International, *Preventing Trafficking in Women and Children in Asia: Issues and Options*, vol. 1, No. 2, p. 4, September 1999.

[4] Miko, *Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response*, p. 4.

[5] United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, p. 1, 2002.

[6] Miko, *Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response*, p. 5.

against their will in slave-like conditions.[7] Victims are often subjected to cruel mental and physical abuse to keep them in servitude, including beating, rape, starvation, forced drug use, confinement, and seclusion. Once victims are brought into destination countries, their passports are confiscated.[8] Many victims suffer mental breakdowns and are exposed to diseases. They may be denied medical care, and once sick, are sometimes killed.

The role of the military

6. Long-held definitions of masculinity reinforced by the military structure contribute to the continued subordination and exploitation of women. The recent exposure of abhorrent actions by certain United Nations peacekeeping troops, provide an example of the scope of this problem. By the end of June 2002, the United Nations had 46,460 peacekeepers from 87 countries.[9] A 1996 study reported that in some war-torn countries, children have become victims of prostitution following the arrival of peacekeeping forces.[10]

7. During a United Nations mission to Cambodia from 1992 to 1993, the number of prostitutes proliferated from 6,000 to 25,000.[11] Child prostitution grew as infection rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases among Cambodian prostitutes increased demand for "clean young girls".[12] Some say the United Nations mission itself was responsible for the rapid spread and possibly even the introduction of HIV in Cambodia.[13] The civilian population in Cambodia tried to complain about United Nations personnel misconduct and abuses, but were in effect told, that "boys will be boys".[14]

8. A 2002 report from UNICEF and Save the Children accused United Nations troops of exploiting children at refugee camps in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. The very humanitarian aid intended to benefit the population was used as a tool for exploitation.[15] Many girls, some younger than 12, were coerced into having sex with non-governmental organization (NGO) workers and United Nations soldiers in exchange for food, money, shelter, or medicine.[16] They said they'd come to expect this was required of them in order to receive the assistance.[17] Many had several children by the age of 18 and others were infected with AIDS. There was little supervision at these camps and the young victims had little chance of complaining about what was happening to them.[18]

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[7] United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, p. 1, 2002.
[8] Miko, *Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response*, p. 5.
[9] Deen, Thalif, Inter Press Service, *UN Cracks Down on Sexual Exploitation by Peacekeepers*, p. 1, 31 July 2002.
[10] Ibid., p. 1.
[11] Mackay, Angela, Peace News, *Sex and the Peacekeeping Soldier: the New UN Resolution*, Issue 2443, p. 2, June/August 2001.
[12] Ibid., p. 2.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., p. 3.
[15] Redfern, Paul, *UN Troops Named in Africa Refugee Sex Scandal*, The East African, p. 1, 4 March 2002.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

9. In recent genocidal conflicts between ethno-national groups in Bosnia and Kosovo, civilian populations were deliberately targeted in strategies of "ethnic-cleansing" and systemic rape.[19] Further abuse by United Nations peacekeeping troops should therefore be unthinkable, yet United Nations troops reportedly solicited prostitutes in war-torn regions.[20]

10. Individual countries' troops also contribute to demand. For example, the military policy of the United States of America considers sexualized recreation "vital" to maintain troop morale.[21] A Congressional report on the Republic of Korea estimates that of the women in the sex industry, the vast majority are prostitutes around United States military bases.[22] These women are recruited through friends, and promised a good job or lured by prospects of marrying American GIs.[23] During the stay of military forces in the Philippines, around 17,000 women have been prostituted in Olongapo City alone, which is the site of the largest United States military base outside the United States.[24]

The need for education

11. In many countries where trafficking is on the rise, lack of economic opportunities exacerbates this problem. Impoverished families are often prey to trafficking procurement agencies.[25] It is not only the poorest families who are prey to these agencies, but also parents who desire modern comforts and luxuries in exchange for the price of their child,[26] which can range from $400 to as high as $800.[27] Traffickers mislead parents into believing their children will be taught a useful skill or trade, but instead they are enslaved in the sex trade network.[28] The parents think they are being paid for the child, but the amount paid by the trafficker creates a debt bondage that the entrapped child victim must pay off. Moreover, once women become prostitutes, they will always be known as prostitutes and their status will leave them shunned from the very families that disposed of them in the first place. This vicious cycle perpetuates itself and ultimately many victims return to the only trade they know.

12. Women often feel an overriding sense of duty to their families. Hence, they rarely object to migrating to another place for work. The family views this as a beneficial exchange, when in reality the debt bondage system leads to their child never gaining freedom.

13. In Thailand, the Daughters' Education Program (DEP) programme was established to get key community leaders involved in educating families at risk for

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[19] Crossette, *When Peacekeepers Turn Into Troublemakers*, p. 2.

[20] Ibid., p. 2.

[21] Enriquez, Jean, *Filipinas in Prostitution Around U.S. Military Bases in Korea: A Recruiting Nightmare*, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women — Asia Pacific, p. 3, November 1999.

[22] Ibid., p. 3.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Healey, Margaret A., *Prosecuting Child Sex Tourists at Home: Do Laws in Sweden, Australia and the United States Safeguard the Rights of Children as Mandated by International Law?*, 18 Fordham Int'l. L. J. 1852, 1864 (1995).

[26] *Fordham International Law Journal*, vol. 18, p. 1864.

[27] Vandenberg, Martina, *Markets and Women's International Human Rights*, 25 Brooklyn J. Int'l. L. 141, 149 (1999).

[28] Ibid., p. 1.

selling a child.[29] It goes without saying that trafficking children has serious mental and physical impacts on their development and growth as individuals. Just as the policy for change is well-articulated, so too must their be effective action at the local level, to create sustaining patterns of change within these vulnerable communities.

Recommendations:

14. We urge Governments to research, report on and take measures to reduce the demand for commercial sex.

15. As to the problem with military personnel and United Nations peacekeeping troops, clear codes of conduct and a reinforced chain of command committed to enforcing a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation is crucial. The United Nations itself needs an effective mechanism to ensure full prosecution of criminal conduct by troops, if individual nations fail or are unwilling to punish their soldiers. Training troops on the intrinsic value of their missions and the importance of respect for and protection of the populations they purport to assist is critical.

16. Providing economic and educational opportunities for young girls is a vital component to their salvation from this horrible network. Changing gender perceptions of women's role in society is also crucial in the battle against trafficking in persons. Educating parents on the detrimental effects of selling their children is fundamental to this process.

[29] http://www.thailife.de/wecare/depdc/depdc_visit.html

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Statement submitted by Empowering Widows in Development and National Women's Commission, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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One invisible category of women, vulnerable to violence across regions, cultures and religions, and across class, caste and age, are widows.

Yet the discourse on violence against widows has almost totally failed to recognize the wide spread, high incidence and gravity of this type of gender violence, perpetrated by family members and the community at large, and often condoned by the State.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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The Beijing Platform for Action makes no reference to widow-abuse and there has been a dearth of research on this hidden example of violence against women. In many cultures, it is common for widows of all ages (and many widows are very young) to be systematically physically, mentally and sexually abused through arcane traditional practices, as well as in the context of inheritance, land and property disputes.

Mourning and burial rites forced on widows in some cultures may be not only violently cruel and degrading but also life-threatening, especially in the context of the AIDS pandemic. In addition, widows, especially older widows, may be vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft, resulting in physical violence, leading to maiming and agonizing deaths. Witchcraft charges are often made in the context of AIDS bereavement. Widows, without male protectors, are often victims of rape, yet this very violence they have suffered is used as a tool to further dishonour them, exposing them to further stigma, leading to honour killings.

Women widowed through war and ethnic cleansing, across regions, face rape, sexual mutilation and torture, the deliberate infection of the AIDS virus, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy. The violence meted out to widows during armed conflict, as refugees and internally displaced persons, often continues long into the post-conflict period due to their poverty and vulnerability to economic and sexual exploitation, trafficking and prostitution, and the stigma of having been victims of sexual crimes.

In developed countries, "elder abuse" is an increasing feature of modern life, and the elderly victims of this type of violence are, in the main, elderly women who are widows.

This violence to widows is exacerbated due to their low status culturally and legally, to their destitution, powerlessness and lack of real access to the protections and remedies of an independent justice system.

Given the huge increases in the numbers of widows of all ages due to conflict, AIDS and the demographic tilt, it is imperative now that actions be recommended to address this hidden area of violence to women.

We invite the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session to acknowledge this area of gender violence by formulating appropriate recommendations in the final documents. Also, we ask that the status of widows be prioritized as a further "emerging issue" for future sessions of the Commission.

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Statement submitted by Mothers' Union, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

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Introduction

The Mothers' Union is an Anglican voluntary organization promoting the well-being of families throughout the world. Our 1 million members, the majority of whom are women, are actively engaged in a variety of initiatives within their own communities. In particular, our Family Life and Literacy and Development programmes allow for a dynamic process of cradle-to-grave empowerment of women by women. Empowerment is an essential tool for eliminating violence against women by enabling them to create and build social capital.

Violence against women

Violence against women is a violation of fundamental human rights and prevents women from achieving equality in every aspect of their lives. It permeates all social strata of every society and all stages of the life cycle. Violence against women means "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".[1]

Women's violent experiences include child abuse, female circumcision, rape as a weapon of war, forced abortion, forced prostitution, trafficking, marital rape and dowry-related violence. Violence can be perpetrated within the family home, the workplace and the community or by the State. It is an expression of the unequal gender relationships that result in the domination and continued subordination of women, thereby denying women advancement and participation in society.

Guiding principles

The elimination of violence cannot be fully achieved without the holistic empowerment of women in social, personal, economic and political spheres. Women must be proactive in advancing change for themselves and ending the cycle of violence.

Strategies and initiatives must target women to address the gender imbalance, but should not be exclusive of men, the necessary allies for change. Governments must move beyond a welfare approach to adopt a transformative approach that tackles the underlying causes that allow violence against women to breed and prevail in society. Governments must ensure a multi-agency, culturally appropriate educational approach in the action they take.

Recommendations

- **Custom and culture**

Excuses for violence against women include religion, tradition and culture, and historic notions of the proper roles of men and women, i.e., male entitlement and superiority. These must cease to be used as a defence and justification of gender-

[1] As defined in para. 113 of the Beijing Platform for Action (see *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II).

based violence. Even where culture itself grants men substantial control over female behaviour, abusive men often exceed that "norm".

It is imperative that Governments:

- Educate, enact and implement laws that change the attitudes of both men and women towards their respective roles and status
- Establish and extend programmes for men and boys that will change attitudes and patterns of abusive and violent behaviour
- Work with traditional and religious leaders to raise awareness of, and reduce violence against women
- Bring communities to understand that cultural values are not to be confused with cultural practices, and that practices can be changed without adversely affecting values
- Support grass-roots based initiatives that work within communities to dispel myths and discourage dangerous customs
- Ensure that the role of women in society is valued and affirmed

- **Health**

It is beneficial to society in every aspect, including child-rearing, education and the economy, to have a healthy female population. The Mothers' Union subscribes to a holistic approach to health care, including the employment of primary prevention strategies as well as welfare policies for survivors of violence. The emotional and psychological, as well as physical, effects suffered by women and girls as a result of violence are devastating — it is imperative that provision be made for both their mental health and physical needs.

Governments must:

- Prioritize awareness campaigns and actively promote the right of women to have good basic health care
- Ensure that women have access to basic needs, such as shelter away from violence
- Enable women to make their own choices with regard to sexual and reproductive health
- Protect women's health by liberating them from violence in all its forms, including female circumcision, which often results in severe infection and death
- Ensure that women receive the best palliative care, counselling, support, advice and information about welfare services

- **Education**

Women make up two thirds of illiterate persons in the world, which significantly impairs their bargaining power within the family and local community. Education builds confidence and esteem and must be used as a tool for teaching women leadership skills, life skills and to give them training so that they can be

enabled to cultivate their own advancement and mobilize change in the private, public and political arenas.

A society free from gender-based violence cannot be realized unless Governments:

- Intensify their efforts to achieve the millennium development goal of removing gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005
- Set up specialized programmes to meet the needs of older women with the help of NGOs
- Through education, dismiss myths and change the attitudes of both boys and girls about gender equality, relationships, violence (sexual), health and stereotypical roles of men and women

- **Poverty**

Impoverished living conditions create an environment that fosters conflict and where men are more likely to vent anger on their partners. Women in poverty are more vulnerable to abuse, forced prostitution and trafficking.

Governments must adopt a dual approach to the issue of poverty as it affects women; considered in,

(a) Inability to exercise human development as characterized in terms of the expansion of valuable human capabilities — achieving knowledge, longevity and a decent standard of living;[2] and

(b) Lack of access to resources, including through income deprivation, denial of paid work outside the family home and unequal access to health-care facilities, which denies women the opportunity to effect change for themselves.

Governments have a duty to:

- Relieve poverty
- Pursue debt cancellation for the developing world
- Focus on increased health care, education, income and employment for women, providing them with the opportunity to survive independently of men

In households where women have increased access to resources and income, violence is less prevalent and the cycle of poverty is less likely to be continued.

- **Representation**

Women are extensively underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making. They need equal civil, legal and political rights in order to draw attention to their needs, affect the political agenda and demand appropriate public action. Governments must ensure that women are enabled to participate in grass-roots initiatives, government committees and decision-making processes at the local, national and international levels. Research shows that the absence of all women working groups is a significant factor in the frequency of violence.[3]

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[2] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2000*, "Human rights and human development".

[3] World Health Organization *World Report on Violence and Health*, 2002.

How families and communities act is governed by prevailing ideas about sexuality and the status of women. National and international legislation set standards for the norms and limits of behaviour. Legislation against gender-based violence affirms that such acts will not be tolerated in society and dispels the idea that it is a private family matter. Women must be given uninhibited access to, and information about, the legal system. Successful legal reform must be accompanied by campaigns to inform men and women of their legal and human rights and boundaries.

Governments must:

- Create effective structures, instruments and resources to enact and enforce such laws
- Ensure that perpetrators are punished
- Provide training, resources and funding for personnel of the criminal justice system
- Compile statistics that (a) portray an accurate picture of the frequency and forms of violence against women, and (b) reveal the effectiveness of laws in preventing and punishing perpetrators of violence
- Assess the effectiveness of their measures in order to make progress

- **HIV and AIDS**

HIV and AIDS are a feminized pandemic. They accompany all of the above factors, are spread by them and generate them in their turn. In any attempt to eliminate all forms of violence, Governments must tackle HIV and AIDS. The UNFPA "State of the world population 2002" report cites family planning and population assistance as the best means to achieve this end, in association with education initiatives. Funding of health care and education for women must be a priority for Governments as a method of prevention and welfare.

- **Conclusion**

In order to eliminate all forms of violence against women it is necessary for Governments to address every aspect of gender inequality. The Mothers' Union holds Governments to the obligations to which they are already committed. Using clear strategies, lines of responsibility and time schedules, Governments must make as a priority the achieving of the millennium development goals and the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

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Statement submitted by the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations, representing 22 women's organizations in 12 countries, has been involved for many years in the promotion of human rights, especially for women and children. We are deeply concerned about all causes of violence against women, particularly in Eastern Europe. Despite the efforts to effect change after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, appear to be on the rise.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

** The document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B, by which the Assembly decided that, if a report is submitted late, the reason should be included in a footnote to the document.

03-20904 (E) 300103

Domestic violence against women of all ages

- Is an expression of fundamental gender inequality,
- Perpetuates both violent physical behaviour against women and the attitudes which promote it,
- Acts as a precedent, setting behavioural patterns for children, i.e., future generations.

The great breadth of this physical and mental abuse transcends all social boundaries and distinctions, from poverty to wealth, from illiteracy to higher academic education, and exists under all political systems. Attitudes which promote gender inequality encourage physical and psychological domination of women and children inside the home and out, promote abusive sociopathic conditions, such as trafficking of women and children, and promote women's economic and political inequality worldwide. The necessary reform of behaviour and attitudes that are often perpetuated by traditional sociocultural patterns threatens well-established relationships and is ignored or resisted. In Eastern Europe, recent efforts towards democratization have begun to address women's issues, but the fundamental inequality is starkly demonstrated in the continuation of domestic violence and in its broadest public expression: the abduction, deception, coercion, selling and even killing of women by traffickers.

Domestic violence against women is unacceptable and we request that all Governments establish enforceable, as well as simple guideline policies of zero tolerance on this pernicious form of human rights abuse. Elimination of domestic abuse of women in the home will have the ancillary benefit of improving the treatment of women outside the home and, more importantly, will provide appropriate behaviour models for the next generation.

In order to effect change in attitudes towards women on a global scale, Governments must take a more proactive role

- In providing and supporting educational programmes for adults against domestic violence,
- Offering training for police, legal workers, health-care workers and others, and, most importantly,
- Educating children worldwide in the concepts of human rights, gender equality and causes of domestic violence.

We, as well as Soroptimist International and the International Federation of Home Economics, supporting non-governmental organizations, appeal to all Governments to take definitive action to stop violence against women.

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Statement submitted by the United States Committee for United Nations Development Fund for Women, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The United States Committee for United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM/USA) supports the innovative and catalytic work being done by UNIFEM to further gender equality and empower the women of the world by providing financial and technical assistance to programmes that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. The United States Committee is one of 19 National Committees worldwide established to extend public awareness and increase financial contributions for the efforts of UNIFEM.

UNIFEM has provided particular leadership within the United Nations system and around the world in efforts to eradicate all forms of violence against women. In 1996, the General Assembly established the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. Its purpose is to identify and support innovative projects aimed specifically at preventing and eliminating gender-based violence. This Trust Fund, administered by UNIFEM, has provided $7 million in grants in 73 countries for local initiatives against violence. However, in 2001 alone, there were more that 300 grant applications worth $15 million submitted to the Trust

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

03-20935 (E) 290103

Fund, far more than the resources of the Fund. UNIFEM/USA urges States Members of the United Nations to increase their support for actions to eliminate violence against women by increasing their contributions to the Trust Fund.

Complementing the Trust Fund's grant-making activities, UNIFEM has created a learning component which analyses the lessons of the Trust Fund and allows grantees to document their work and tell their stories of efforts to end violence against women. UNIFEM has published a resource book, "Picturing a Life Free from Violence", which provides organizations with materials that can be adapted to cultural and country-specific content.

A further effort by UNIFEM has been regional advocacy campaigns to end violence against women. The focus of these initiatives is to promote strengthened legislation against gender-based violence.

UNIFEM has assisted Governments and NGOs to partner in strengthening the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, an important tool in promoting legal and policy frameworks to eliminate violence against women throughout the world. UNIFEM/USA is committed to advocacy efforts within the United States for ratification of the Convention.

UNIFEM/USA supports the multifaceted strategies and programmes of UNIFEM to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, emphasizing the need to address the violence aspects associated with the particular vulnerability of women and girls.

Trafficking is an egregious violation of human rights that places millions of women and girls worldwide in situations of abuse and exploitation. UNIFEM has focused its work on trafficking in South Asia by advocating for government recognition of this problem as a high national and regional priority. Trafficking in the United States is an issue of grave concern for UNIFEM/USA as the United States Government estimates that 50,000 individuals are trafficked annually.

The contributions of UNIFEM to protecting women and girls from violence in war and armed conflict are an integral part of its tireless efforts to promote the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) legitimizing a prominent place for women in decision-making in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building.

In April 2001, UNIFEM appointed two independent experts to carry out a global assessment of the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building. The independent experts listened to and learned from women on the ground and saw a continuum of violence against women before, during and after armed conflicts. They witnessed how during armed conflicts, the violence women face increases dramatically — in number, frequency and severity. The UNIFEM report, "Women, War and Peace" published on the second anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), also details the success women have had in organizing networks across borders, helping to prevent conflict and promoting the building of peace.

UNIFEM/USA congratulates UNIFEM on its steadfast commitment to advancing the status of women throughout the world and encourages more United Nations Member States to partner with UNIFEM to actualize gender equality and end violence against women.

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Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, International Alliance of Women, International Council of Women, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhoods Centres, International Federation on Ageing, Soroptimist International, Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Bahá'í International Community, International Federation of University Women, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, League of Women Voters of the United States, National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Pan-Pacific Southeast Asian Women's Association International, Trickle Up Program, United States Committee for UNIFEM, World Young Women's Christian Association, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Altrusa International, Armenian International Women's Association, United Nations Association of the USA, non-governmental organizations on the Roster

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

We, the international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and members of the NGO Committee on UNIFEM, both applaud and direct your attention to the special efforts of UNIFEM on the two thematic issues of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women: (i) Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women; and (ii) women's human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Moreover, UNIFEM's leadership and substantive programmes in these areas strengthen the work of our own organizations.

Women's human rights are central to all UNIFEM programmes. UNIFEM continues to focus their work in relation to human rights through concentrating on three areas:

- Eliminating violence against girls and women of all ages by investing in prevention, protection and advocacy strategies
- Assisting in the effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Enhancing the understanding of Governments, advocates and United Nations partners of the intersection between human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS to strengthen responses to the epidemic.

UNIFEM's support of initiatives to end violence against women links innovation and replication. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women serves as a grant-making laboratory for new and innovative strategies and best practices. Since it began, the Trust Fund has allocated more than $7 million in 73 countries. Lessons learned from the Trust Fund are fed into national, regional and global programmes that UNIFEM's field network and partners develop into longer-term, high-impact strategies to end violence against women. A further key focus of UNIFEM initiatives is to build an enabling environment for ending violence against women through promoting new and strengthened legislation.

UNIFEM's efforts on CEDAW have focused on increasing the effectiveness of reporting, monitoring and implementation and strengthening the capacity of and partnerships between Governments and NGOs to use the Convention to create stronger legal and policy frameworks for gender equality.

UNIFEM's Programme of Action on Gender, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS is aimed at putting the gender and human rights dimensions of the epidemic at the centre of government, United Nations agency and NGO strategies, programmes and policies. In this context, UNIFEM supports the building of capacity in mainstreaming gender and HIV/AIDS, works at the community level to impact on women's lives and brings the voices of women, both infected and affected by HIV,

to national, regional and global arenas. UNIFEM is the co-chair, with the United Nations Population Fund, of the Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS.

In the area of women and media, UNIFEM produces and supports diverse and expanding strategies for developing and disseminating media and materials to inform, inspire, and build connections between women's rights advocates regionally and nationally. UNIFEM supports gender training and networking on gender issues for journalists in various parts of the world. UNIFEM published "Picturing a Life Free of Violence", consolidating and highlighting a selection of successful communication strategies and media materials used to combat violence against women around the world.

UNIFEM, along with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, was a founding organization of WomenWatch — the United Nations electronic network for information on gender and women. UNIFEM maintains its own newsletter, *Currents*, which informs readers of UNIFEM's cutting edge work for women worldwide and is also available electronically.

UNIFEM sponsors opportunities in information technologies for women. Two innovative examples are a partnership with CISCO Systems and the Jordanian Government that is developing curricula based on the assessed needs and interests of young women and WINNER II, a global training for women entrepreneurs to sell their products online.

The NGO Committee on UNIFEM wholeheartedly endorses the effective and important work being done by UNIFEM towards gender equality, peace and development, and urges increased financial support from Member States and NGOs alike. UNIFEM's partnerships with UNDP country offices have increased 12 per cent in the last year; however, $16 million of requests from the Trust Fund could not be considered because of limited resources. We need the leadership of UNIFEM to continue to advance the human rights of women worldwide.

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Statement submitted by Radin Institute for Family Health Education and Promotion, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The advancement and empowerment of women: challenge for women's health in the media and information and communication technologies

The goal of the present statement is to address how girls and women are portrayed by the collective media — television, movies, advertising, newspapers and magazines — and how this depiction affects their health. While emphasizing what has been considered in the Beijing+5 initiative and the Millennium Declaration goals, we believe that perspectives about women's advancement and empowerment need to be efficiently integrated in the working agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Geneva in 2003, and the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

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Women look to the media as primary sources of health information. Research also shows that girls and women are influenced by the way females are portrayed by the media. Health and education are the most critical areas of concern in the advancement and empowerment of women. To strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health, the importance of an educational approach to changing unhealthy behaviours must be emphasized. Information and communication technologies and the media can provide a valuable context for this purpose and must be considered as broad-based vehicles for conducting culturally competent public health education programmes. When empowered and involved, women and mothers, as primary caregivers in almost all cultures can be effective partners in health education programmes through the media and information and communication technologies.

The application of information and communication technologies as a tool for the effective encouragement and establishment of healthy behaviours covers the entire spectrum of women's lives from early childhood development through adolescence and the reproductive years. In this regard, access to information and communication technologies, capabilities and capacities in using information and communication technologies as an educational device and appropriate policy measures to create an enabling environment for using information and communication technologies must be addressed as potential obstacles. We need to provide greater clarity in defining these problems and challenges from a gender perspective.

There is a need to provide women's groups with the skills to access the news media, frame health problems in a social context and advance a healthy public policy. This means understanding how news, entertainment, and advertising present health and social issues. The issue of women's health news confusion has become so intertwined with health news. Two major causes of death in women (heart disease and cancer) should be those that media coverage clarifies, not clouds. Women's health initiatives should be prioritized in all phases of production in media, beginning with programme planning.

The message of violence and health deterioration through the media and information and communication technologies could be a potential threat to the Millennium Declaration's specific goals of empowerment and advancement of women. It is necessary to substitute this with the message of tolerance and health promotion and the active involvement and partnership of media and information and communication technology institutions, Governments and civil society. Action must be taken to bring together two powerful industries — health and the media — to increase the understanding and relationship between them. It is critical that leaders of these industries begin exploring the current images of women in the media and work together to bring attention to this problem. To establish a women's health promotion approach in the media and information and communication technologies, Governments and private sectors need to make a comprehensive decision based upon a deep understanding of the Millennium Declaration goals.

The advancement and empowerment of women demands a challenge for distributing health promotion values through the media and information and communication technology vehicles.

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Statement submitted by Soroptimist International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The five member organizations of Project 5-0: International Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW International), International Council of Women, International Federation of University Women, Soroptimist International and Zonta International, each in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, share the common goal of promoting the legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional advancement of women's human rights. Together, our membership represents more than a half a million women and men in 120 countries.

The continued, prevalent, systematic and even sanctioned violence against women throughout the world is a common concern of every member of Project 5-0 organizations and is an important focus of programmes and campaigns in each of our organizations. Violence against women is a human rights abuse. Our organizations have taken the lead in providing services, drafting and advocating for legislation, raising awareness through advocacy, education and training, and building national, regional and international networks to address gender-based violence.

* E/CN.6/2003/1.

03-21253 (E) 040203

Project 5-0 members support the efforts of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to eradicate violence against women, and hold Member States parties to their commitments to end discrimination and safeguard women and girls. We encourage the use of the Optional Protocol to the Convention to report violations of the Convention responsibilities as an added tool to render Governments accountable to the women and girls of their country.

The establishment of gender equality must begin with the recognition of the equal value of female and male children in the home and in the community and the condemnation of all forms of family violence. The international community must speak out strongly against harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, dowry murder and honour killings that lead to death, disabilities and life-long mental, physical and psychological damage of millions of women and girls.

Schools can play an important part by fostering new attitudes of masculinity based on respect for girls and women of all ages and the important role of males in preventing gender violence. Yet, the widespread problem of male schoolteachers who sexually abuse girl students in some regions of Africa should be recognized and addressed.

Trafficking is a heinous form of gender-based violence, placing millions of women and girls in situations of abuse or exploitation such as forced prostitution, slavery-like practices, battering and extreme cruelty, sweatshop labour and exploitive domestic servitude. We urge the United Nations and its Member States to adopt and implement effective measures to punish those individuals who perpetrate these acts as well as those whose business is to profit by facilitating such activities. We call special attention to the unfortunate role of the United Nations peacekeepers and other internationals in the exploitation of women and girls.

More women and girls in the world are contracting HIV/AIDS than men — a fact that needs to be acknowledged and addressed by the international community as another form of violence against women. Women's inability to negotiate safe sex and refuse unwanted sex is a major contributing factor to the spread of HIV/AIDS. We implore the United Nations and its Member States to take strong and immediate leadership to prevent further devastation and death by creating laws and deterrents to protect women and girls from HIV/AIDS.

Women of all ages are singled out for atrocities in situations of armed conflict, with few consequences for perpetrators. As a tactic of war, women are raped, abducted, humiliated and made to undergo forced pregnancy, sexual abuse and slavery. Diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, spread faster during and after armed conflicts. Protection and support for women survivors of violence in conflict and post-conflict areas is grossly inadequate. We call on the United Nations and its Member States to implement and expand the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), by providing more information on, and services to, women in armed conflict, and through integrating the role of women into decision-making in post-conflict reconstruction and in peacemaking.

By and large the extent of gender-based violence is invisible because of lack of sufficient data, disaggregated by age. Moreover, fear, religious beliefs and shame prevent many women from speaking out on this issue. Media and information communication technology can be a powerful medium that would bring to light both

the problems and the best practices in handling violence against women. Yet, care must be taken that the facts regarding crimes of violence against women are made visible in a dignified manner and in recognition of the victim's right to privacy.

We call on the United Nations and its Member States to support the development of a database of good practices in handling violence against women and to promote equal access to such information by using appropriate combinations of information communication technology. Given the limited resources and other constraints, such as literacy of rural women, older technology such as radio can be more effective than new technology such as the Internet.

We applaud the United Nations for establishing the General Assembly open-ended ad hoc working group on integrating United Nations conference follow-up to integrate and coordinate implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. We would like to request that the United Nations permit NGOs with consultative status to observe this working group and have access to the output of this working group to help to improve collaboration between Member States and non-governmental organizations regarding violence against women and other issues.

We hope that the United Nations will continue its efforts to work to bring this critical human rights issue into the open and in partnership with Member States and non-governmental organizations to place it firmly on international and national policy agendas with the allocation of adequate resources to implement commitments.

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Statement submitted by the Women's National Commission, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The Women's National Commission is the United Kingdom's independent advisory body to government on women. It has over 230 partner organizations — women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trades unions, political parties, religious groups and women's sections of other NGOs — representing several million women throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Women's Nations Commission also includes and works with other women's international organizations worldwide.

1. Technologies to create, process and disseminate information and therefore knowledge and power have been with us since the beginning of human time but access to information and subsequent empowerment has always been unequally shared and that inequality usually has a gender dimension.

2. The three global women's conferences — Nairobi, 1985; Beijing, 1995; New York, 2000 — all addressed the issues related to women and the media. With new

* E/CN.6/2003/1

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media and other forms of communication technologies now coming to the fore, the General Assembly has called for a World Summit on the Information Society to meet at Geneva in December 2003. The discussions and outcomes of this session of the Commission on the Status of Women will therefore be a contribution to the World Summit. The expert group meetings, the Know How 2002 Conference and the NGO round table 2002 have not only outlined the problems still experienced by women in this field but have also described positive and exciting developments for women since 2000, particularly in Africa.

3. It is therefore essential that we ensure that our deliberations and agreed statements are mainstreamed into every aspect of the World Summit and not tacked on to the main debate and the final document as an afterthought. To do this, those of us representing civil society must return to our nation states and our regions and make sure that at every level what we have agreed at the Commission on the Status of Women is discussed and recognized, while at the United Nations level, the Division for the Advancement of Women carries out its mainstreaming function of the gender dimension into the work of the World Summit.

4. Despite considerable progress in recent years, access to information and communication technologies, notably the telephone, the mobile phone, the Internet and broadcast networks, remains unequally distributed. There are, for example, more televisions in Brazil, more fixed-line telephones in Italy, more mobile phones in the Republic of Korea and greater connectivity in Luxembourg than in the whole of Africa. Yet the population of Africa and the needs of its people greatly exceeds those of these other countries. These disparities are known as the "digital divide". It is important that we are aware of how this divide differentially affects women and that where we have success stories these are evaluated and analysed and good practice is spread.

5. Positive aspects of the information and communication technologies for women:

- These technologies are central to the creation of the merging global knowledge-based economy and can play an important role in accelerating growth, in promoting sustainable development and eradicating poverty in developing countries as well as countries in transition and facilitating their effective integration into the global economy.
- They offer vast opportunities for women's empowerment and the promotion of gender equality.
- Women's economic livelihoods can be expanded through increased access to local and international markets for women producers and traders and through increased access to jobs, education and training and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Increased flexibility in employment conditions.
- Increased access to health, nutrition, education and other human development opportunities such as political participation.
- Through networking, women have made extensive use of ICT as an effective tool for the promotion of gender equality for empowerment.

- Access to advice services in, for example, situations of violence and sharing of information.

6. Negative aspects:

- The intersection of gendered social relationships, gender discrimination and gender-blind ICT policy processes undermine women's access to opportunities in the merging knowledge and information society and also diminish the potential of ICT to be an effective tool for the promotion of gender equality.
- Women's poverty, lack of access and opportunities, illiteracy, including computer illiteracy and language barriers, prevent the use of many aspects of the media.
- Negative images of women and children and stereotyped portrayals continue to exist. Pornography is a serious issue.
- Although more women are now employed in the media and have started to move into senior positions, men still dominate, particularly in the print and broadcast media and earn more and have greater influence on content than women.

7. The situation in the United Kingdom:

- In the United Kingdom, women are working in the media in increasingly large numbers, and in recent years women have moved into senior positions in newspapers, magazines and broadcasting. However, men still dominate and women tend to earn less than men of the same age.
- In the new technologies, a recent survey showed that 52 per cent of men surveyed used the Internet compared to 39 per cent of women. There are, however, significant differences between groups of women. Social class plays a huge role, as does age. However, things are changing for the better as a recent poll shows that almost equal numbers of boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 16 are Internet users.
- The United Kingdom Government has introduced a multiplicity of initiatives to increase the number of women using the new technology, which appear to be successful.
- Good Practice: Governments are under increasing pressure to experiment with the new technologies to enhance democratic participation. Recently, the United Kingdom All Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence in conjunction with the Hansard Society and Women's Aid initiated "Womenspeak". It was an innovative, online, interactive project in which survivors of domestic violence were able to speak to each other and Members of Parliament. The object was to reach out to those least likely to engage in the democratic process. For most of these women, it would have been almost impossible for them to participate in other more traditional methods of democratic involvement. The project resulted in changes in government policy and legislation.

8. For action at the Commission on the Status of Women, 2003:

- An exchange of views on obstacles to progress and examples of good practice for the empowerment of women in the Information Society of the 21st century.
- The mainstreaming of our deliberations into the World Summit on the Information Society Geneva 2003.

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Statement submitted by the Women's National Commission, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The Women's National Commission (WNC) is an independent body providing advice on women to the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. WNC has over 230 partner organizations — women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, political parties, faith organizations and women's sections of other NGOs — representing several million women throughout the United Kingdom. WNC also includes and works with other international women's organizations worldwide.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and all human rights conventions decry violence against women, which is one of the two themes of the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

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Violence against women and girls is deeply ingrained throughout the world, manifesting itself in the most private to the most public arenas. States use rape as a tool of war and sexual abuse of all kinds as a means of torture and humiliation. Men pursue, trap and rape women and girls in cities, in rural areas, in deserts and on mountainsides, crossing boundaries of culture, religion, region, class and caste; male relatives — most commonly husbands and sexual partners, but also fathers, uncles and brothers — abuse, maim and murder their wives, daughters, nieces and sisters. Widows suffer further abuse and violence at the hands of male in-laws. Workplaces can be sites of daily sexual harassment and abuse, as can public transport systems, hospitals, schools and corporations. The media broadcast and print images of women that continually promote their sexuality and downplay their qualities as workers, professionals and leaders, not to mention their pivotal positions in their families as the childbearers, major nurturers and carers.

Key facts

- At least one in five of the world's female population has been physically or sexually abused by a man or men at some time in her life. Many, including pregnant women and young girls, are subject to severe, sustained or repeated attacks (World Health Organization (WHO), 1997).
- Worldwide it has been estimated that violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer, and a greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined (World Bank, 1993).
- In every country where reliable, large-scale studies have been conducted, results indicate that at least 10 per cent and usually much greater proportions of women report that they have been physically abused by an intimate partner during their lifetime (WHO, 2000).
- Population-based studies report that between 12 and 25 per cent of women have experienced attempted or completed forced sex by an intimate partner or ex-partner at some time in their lives (WHO, 2000).
- Interpersonal violence was the tenth leading cause of death for women 15 to 44 years of age in 1998 (WHO, 2000).
- Forced prostitution, trafficking for sex and sex tourism appear to be growing. Existing data and statistical sources on trafficking of women and children estimated 500,000 women entering the European Union in 1995 (WHO, 2000).

Most studies on violence against women indicate that:

- The perpetrators of violence against women are almost exclusively men
- Women are at greatest risk of violence from men they know
- Women and girls are the most frequent victims of violence within the family and between intimate partners
- Physical abuse in intimate relationships is almost always accompanied by severe psychological and verbal abuse

- Social institutions, including criminal justice systems put in place to protect citizens, too often blame or ignore battered women and those subject to rape (WHO, 2000)

The United Kingdom is a plural society made up of many ethnicities and of people holding a wide range of belief systems. Women in the United Kingdom, like their sisters elsewhere in the world, also face physical, sexual and psychological violence on a daily basis. This experience is exacerbated among women with a disability and lesbians.

We call upon Governments everywhere to institute the necessary programmes and monitor their effectiveness, as follows.

Nationally

- Zero tolerance of all forms of violence against women
- An effective legal framework that protects the safety and rights of abused women and children and that holds perpetrators accountable for their behaviour
- An end to the consideration of domestic violence as a private matter
- The provision of specialist services, such as safe shelters and other community support and advocacy services offering physical, emotional and practical care to abused women and children, including a well-resourced network of rape crisis lines and centres to give support to women survivors of sexual violence, all with access to health care
- Legal systems that condemn and punish acts of violence such as so-called honour crimes and crimes against widows who may be held responsible for the death of their husbands and that forbid traditional harmful practices of all kinds
- Resources and support for NGOs working to eradicate violence against women
- Encouragement and support for public service broadcasting that:
  - Promotes cultural attitudes condemning gender-based violence
  - Promotes tolerance and understanding
  - Shows images of women and girls that are neither sexualized nor pornographic
- Programmes in schools from the earliest ages that promote respect and equality for women of all ages and status and decry all forms of violence against women
- Training for military and police personnel and for all peacekeeping forces forbidding gender-based violence in all circumstances
- Gender awareness for judges, all court professionals and traditional court elders
- Systems to monitor and bring those responsible for gender-based violence against women to account

Regionally and globally

- Support for international NGOs working to eradicate violence against women
- Training for military and police personnel and for all peacekeeping forces forbidding gender-based violence in all circumstances
- Gender awareness for judges, all court professionals and personnel of the International Criminal Court and other regional and global institutions
- Financial and other support for the United Nations and regional systems to monitor and bring Governments responsible for tolerating and failing to eradicate gender-based violence against women to account
- Full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) involving women in helping to reduce conflict and violence

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Statement submitted by the All-China Women's Federation, a non-governmental organization in general and consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

Elimination of violence against women: an unshirkable duty of women's federations

14 January 2003

The All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) is the largest women's mass organization in China. To represent and safeguard women's rights is the aim and one major function of women's federations. ACWF utilizes its network, which covers all cities and counties in the country and reaches every sector, for its work for women's rights and advancement.

In implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality,

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development and peace for the twenty-first century", women's federations have carried out a series of actions, including combating violence against women, proposing legislation and helping to formulate and improve relevant laws and regulations, conducting legal literacy campaigns as well as participating in the implementation and monitoring of law enforcement.

1. ACWF is of the view that the law is a fundamental, powerful weapon for safeguarding women's rights and interests. In recent years, based on data collection and situation analysis on violence against women, women's federations have participated in the formulation process of laws and regulations closely related to women's rights. For example, ACWF has surveyed and reflected women's opinions and concerns, put forward suggestions and participated in drafting laws such as the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and the Programme for the development of Chinese women (2001-2010) and amending the Marriage Law. The Marriage Law, as amended in 2001, stipulates that domestic violence is prohibited.

2. One of the priorities of ACWF is to raise the legal awareness of people and educate women to understand, obey and apply laws. Women's federations at different levels have conducted various kinds of legal literacy and publicity activities, such as legal counselling, setting up an on-site office and conducting lectures, workshops and case studies. They have cooperated with the media in nurturing a positive public opinion for the elimination of all forms of violence against women through increased media coverage on discussions about the issue of violence against women, further exposure of violent acts against women and educating the public that the infringement of women's rights is illegal and shall be subject to punishment, if the circumstances are serious.

3. Women's federations are active in comprehensive administration regarding penalizing criminal acts against women. Taking the campaign against trafficking in women and children as an example, many provinces have established cross-sector working mechanisms, including leading groups composed of representatives of the police, judiciary, court, civil affairs, publicity and education departments and non-governmental organizations.

To assist the Government in combating trafficking in women and children, the staff of women's federations has paid household visits in urban and rural neighbourhoods to trace clues of trafficking, mobilize local residents and help rescue trafficked women and children. They have also followed up with rehabilitation and reintegration activities.

4. ACWF takes the campaign against trafficking in women and children as a priority area for cooperation projects with the Government and international agencies. One example is the Mekong River Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women, conducted jointly by ACWF and the International Labour Organization in Yunnan Province. The Labour, Education and Civil Affairs Departments all participated and provided educational, prevention and rehabilitation services. A comprehensive mechanism for the campaign against trafficking in women and children has been basically established and efforts are being made to disseminate further effective prevention strategies and models.

5. In recent years, to eliminate domestic violence against women, women's federations have pushed hard for the formulation of legal provisions and laws

against domestic violence. They have also provided hotlines, legal aid centres or work as legal agents or juries for women whose rights were violated. Now, the issue of domestic violence has drawn the attention of all sectors in the society.

Together with the international community, the All-China Women's Federation will continue to make unremitting efforts for women's rights and gender equality in a devoted and responsible spirit.

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Statement submitted by the European Women's Lobby, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The European Women's Lobby welcomes the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women will review the implementation of policies and actions taken to address violence against women over the past decade and states the following:

The European Women's Lobby recalls that the Beijing Platform for Action clearly states that violence against women is the result of the historically unequal power relations between women and men, and notes that over the past decade the gender dimension of violence against women is being eroded and replaced by neutral concepts that describe the issue in terms of family dynamics (domestic violence) and/or market policies (prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation). The European Women's Lobby calls on the European Union and the United Nations to explicitly recognize that violence against women is the direct result of unequal power relations between women and men in all public statements, policies and programmes.

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The European Women's Lobby notes that while many commitments to address violence against women have been made both at the regional (European Union) and international (United Nations) level over the past decade, the issue of follow-up and monitoring has been seriously neglected as systematic data and statistics on all forms of violence against women are still lacking. Systematic analysis of the impact of male violence on women experiencing multiple discrimination as a result of the intersection of gender, ethnic origins, sexual orientation, colour, disability and/or religion is also lacking. The European Women's Lobby calls for greater use of existing mechanisms such as national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and calls for guidelines to facilitate data on violence against women for those sections of the report that are relevant. The European Women's Lobby invites both the European Union and the United Nations to consider the work already done in this area and especially its proposal on indicators to measure progress, to determine gaps and to identify and address emerging issues in combating violence against women.[1]

The European Women's Lobby considers trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation as one of the most pressing issues to emerge on an international basis over the past decade and insists that prostitution and trafficking are directly linked to the lack of economic independence of women and the structural power relationships between women and men. Measures fighting poverty and contributing to women's empowerment will have a decisive impact in combating trafficking and all forms of exploitation of women. The European Women's Lobby strongly opposes any measure that aims to legalize prostitution as a form of work on the pretext that this will guarantee better social and economic conditions for women in prostitution. Moreover, such an approach undermines the progress achieved in some areas of equality for women over the past 50 years. Therefore, efforts to combat trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation should be multi-dimensional and include addressing the demand side, i.e., the buyers/clients of the sexual market.

The European Women's Lobby also calls on the Governments of the members of the European Union and the United Nations to be vigilant of emerging forms of violence against women, these include: the use of new technologies as a means of exacerbating violence against women and the rise of cultural and religious fundamentalism, which undermine women's human rights, their dignity and equality.

[1] European Women's Lobby, "Towards a common European framework to monitor progress in combating violence against women", second edition 2002, developed with the input of the experts of the EWL Observatory on violence against women.

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Statement submitted by the Legião da Boa Vontade (Legion of Good Will), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The Legion of Good Will (Legião da Boa Vontade), a non-governmental organization (NGO) in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, in its permanent campaign against hunger and for the dignity of women and their eternal spirits, promotes women's and girls' human rights in several worldwide programmes developed by professionals and volunteers in its 552 community centres in Brazil and around the world.

Women's and girls' education and training, health, power and decision-making are essential tools to combat poverty and to ensure women's development and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

As the President of the organization, José de Paiva Netto, declared: "Solidarity has outgrown the bright field of ethics and is visible now as a strategy, in order to enable human beings to reach survival. We propose to counteract certain effects of globalization (which bring about increased poverty), by the all-encompassing

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universalization of fraternal love as a powerful tool against the pseudo-fatalism of poverty. Thousands of years ago, Virgil warned in the Aeneid: Hunger is a bad adviser. Based on that warning, decades ago I launched to the awareness of nations the proposition of a new kind of economic doctrine: the economics of human solidarity, within the strategy of survival ... Charity should be the inspiring light of peoples' Governments. Charity is the most powerful equipment for peace, when it is also understood as fraternity and solidarity."

The Legion of Good Will's international, educational and social programmes have improved the lives of multitudes of women, girls and children in need, through its 552 community centres around the world, comprised of day care centres, homes for elderly people, as well as the traditional Midnight Charity Round, Mobile Soup Kitchen, which since 1962 has been saving the lives of those who are homeless and live in the streets. Among the several campaigns of the Legion of Good Will to enhance women's and girls' dignity for a better life and empowerment, we give emphasis to the mother child health-care programme. This programme aims to cooperate to decrease malnutrition, maternal and child mortality rates. It helps destitute mothers to bear their children safely. The unborn child receives food and medical support before and after birth until one year of age. Beyond the physical care for mother and child, educational, psychological, nutritional, sanitation and health-care workshops re-educate and improve women's social and family conditions. According to statistical information published by UNICEF, because of poverty Brazil faces an alarming situation regarding child mortality: 120,000 children die annually before reaching their first year of life, and 57,000 do not survive even their first week of life. To minimize this catastrophic situation, the Legion of Good Will increased resources to fight against child mortality. During 2002, a total of 22,344 mothers and children benefited through the mother child health-care programme.

The Legion of Good Will provides more than 100 places in free pre-schools and schools for underprivileged children with a multicultural curriculum. Emphasis is on cooperative learning strategies, multimedia teaching and learning, cooperative discipline, encouraging student responsibility and self-discipline, gender equity to avoid gender inequities; many girls do not receive an equal education. The main purpose of the Legion's instructional strategies is to guarantee a healthy childhood with solid educational basis for children, fostering children's individual, intellectual, collective and human development.

The Legion maintains the Educational, Cultural and Community Centre José de Paiva Netto in Rio de Janeiro. This centre can care for more than 1,000 children. The Legion provides nursery care, day care centres, pre-schools and elementary schools (first to fourth grades). More than 2,000 families are provided with professional training, medical and dental care, daily food basket distribution, clothes, shoes, as well as educational workshops with emphasis on women's health and human rights, and orientation to encourage men and women to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues. It promotes the Campaign "Don't do drugs — To live is better", preventing men and women from using drugs, re-educating them to succeed in a drug-free environment. It develops non-discriminatory education and training to enable women to be computer literate, reducing the female illiteracy rate in science and technology.

We would like to conclude this statement reaffirming that the Legion of Good Will's campaigns for women's and girls' human rights are based on actions for gender equality and the advancement of women. The Legion of Good Will's media are open to promote the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which reflects a new international commitment to the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere.

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Statement submitted by World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and Catholic Women, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The Thematic Issues (Items 1 and 2 of the provisional agenda):

At this, the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, we wish to affirm that we fully support both thematic issues, which form a major part of the work undertaken by our organizations.

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We acknowledge those Governments who do provide grants to women's organizations, which enables women to be trained in the use of information and communication technologies.

While these issues are vitally important to the advancement and empowerment of women, it behooves us to recognize the very serious issues affecting the basic human rights of women and the girl child which can no longer be ignored by the international community.

We are concerned that the increased use of information and communication technologies such as the worldwide web, Internet chat rooms, computer and video games, DVDs and the media in particular has led to an increase in the debasement of women and children. The trafficking of women and girls (and boys) for the purposes of prostitution, pornography, sex tourism and paedophilia has flourished into a billion dollar e-business. The media and information and communication technologies, which should be used as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women and women's human rights, have in fact become essential tools in promoting violence against women and the girl child (and boys).

It is distressing to note that due to lack of education and to poverty, many families sell their young daughters to traffickers. These girls are then used for prostitution and for pornographic purposes. It is not a "human right" for men to subject women and young girls to this type of violence.

Therefore, we fully support the statement made at the International Conference, entitled "21st Century Slavery — The Human Rights Dimension to Trafficking in Human Beings", which says: "The trafficking of women and children poisons human society and is an affront to fundamental values shared by all cultures and peoples, values rooted in the very nature of the human person".

In sub-Saharan Africa, between 500,000 and 1 million mothers suffer from obstetric fistula, which results in these women becoming complete outcasts from their families and society. Unfortunately, these mothers do not have access to the necessary ante-natal, birth or post-natal care which has virtually eradicated — regardless of maternal age — this condition in other countries. In 1987, the World Health Organization (WHO) held a "Safe Motherhood" Conference in Nairobi. While much has been achieved since then, unfortunately mothers suffering from obstetric fistula in sub-Saharan Africa have been ignored. These forgotten women experience unimaginable suffering. The rehabilitation of this condition requires psychological as well as medical treatment.

WHO has developed a Labour Pictograph, which is an excellent aid in helping with the early identification of complications of women in labour, but due to the lack of trained personnel to assist these mothers, they end up being stripped of their basic human right as enunciated in article 25, paragraph 2, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This states that motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and protection assistance. One of the 12 critical areas of concern identified at the Beijing Conference for Women was the right of women to the "highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".

Apart from the lack of even primary school education for so many of these women and girls, they do not have access to a telephone so therefore have zero access to modern information and communication technology, which aids and abets their problems.

MaterCare International has set up a clinic in Ghana to treat mothers who suffer from obstetric fistula. It also plans to train traditional birth attendants in the use of the pictorial ante-natal card. These trained birth attendants will then be qualified to provide proper care for pregnant women in rural areas. Lack of funding prevents an extension of this vital work. Therefore, it is vital that more financial aid be provided for this work.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the United Nations, its agencies as well as non-governmental organizations to support an international advocacy role on behalf of women with obstetric fistula. This will enable the condition to be drawn to the attention of world communities in the same way as that of female circumcision (i.e., female genital mutilation) while recognizing that the education of both mothers and birth attendants is the first step in the prevention of this condition.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, violence against women was identified as one of the most pressing concerns of women worldwide. We believe the definition of violence against women and the girl child should now be expanded to include abortion.

There is currently much debate on the link between abortion and certain types of cancer in females. Conflicting evidence is being presented, but as long as the possibility of such linkage exists and until it is conclusively disproved, it is unacceptable for any agency, United Nations, or NGO to actively promote abortion in any of its forms.

Post-abortion grief has been recognized and accepted as a health problem in women who have aborted. Abortion forces a mother to use violent actions against her unborn child, which results in her becoming the mother of a dead child. As a result of her life experiences, Germaine Greer argues that abortion is a sign, not of liberation, but of oppression. Multiple abortions left her sterile and she suffers from other gynaecological health problems. How many other women have suffered the same fate? Women are now successfully suing abortionists for not providing them with information detailing the health risks associated with abortion.

Abortion provides an "out" for men and women to have sex without any responsibility or thought, either for the immediate termination of the life of their child or the future health risks to the woman.

In many countries girls are considered to be a burden upon families and of no value and thus become the prime target for abortion. Should the baby girl survive the nine months in the womb, upon birth she is then abandoned and left to die either in a gutter or rubbish dump. Abortion is a war against the unborn, and especially the "girl" baby. This is violence committed against future generations of females.

We must continue to express a vision for a violence-free world loudly and clearly. We must work to maintain a strong network of services by and for women who have survived violence. We must teach our daughters to expect equality for themselves and others. We must teach our sons to question sexism and reject violence, to learn the importance of controlling their impulses of immediate sexual gratification and thrills, and to respect women as equals.

Therefore, we call upon all Member States to:

- Legislate to ban the use of the World Wide Web, the Internet and video games, etc., as a means of sexually exploiting women and young girls (and boys).

- Introduce legislation to criminalize the acts of trafficking, pimping, brothel keeping and the procurement of women and girls for prostitution and pornographic purposes and to set jail terms befitting these abusive crimes.

- Provide support services for prostituted women and provide them with genuine economic alternatives for legitimate remuneration.

Further, we call upon the international community to:

- Assist agencies such as MaterCare International who are already working in sub-Saharan Africa, by providing increased aid so that more clinics can be set up for the rehabilitation of women suffering from obstetric fistula.

- Provide further funding for the training of more personnel as traditional birth assistants who will then be able to assist these women by providing ante-natal, birth and post-natal care.

We further call upon the United Nations, its agencies, all States Members and NGOs to work together for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and the girl child.

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Statement submitted by National Alliance of Women's Organisations, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

The National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) has more than a hundred members made up of women's organizations or women's sections of mixed groups headquartered in England, and individual subscribers. It seeks to promote empowerment, human rights, equality and justice for all women. It has a special role in relation to the European Women's Lobby (EWL), sending an elected delegate to the Lobby to represent women's concerns and needs from the region. With sister organizations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, NAWO forms the United Kingdom Joint Committee on Women, developing policy, representing women's concerns and views and implementing EWL strategies in the United Kingdom. In addition to its work with members of the alliance, NAWO also works in partnership with the Women's National Commission (United Kingdom) and many other organizations both nationally and internationally. NAWO is concerned, at this

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forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, to bring together the two separate, major themes, which are fundamentally linked.

1. The media is a product which has social, moral and cultural implications. The use of the media is widespread, as entertainment, as an educational tool and as a public service. Because of the effect it has upon both the individual and society, consideration of its content and output is vital. Although civil society recognizes the importance of print, broadcasting and electronic means of communications, the concerns of women are frequently ignored and women's access to them and the benefits and dangers posed are inadequately recognized.

2. A mass media that is not gender sensitive marginalizes the contributions of women. Women's opportunities to be heard and therefore influence world events are still few, while this global industry continues with a predominance of men in the most influential and highly paid positions and a predominately masculine agenda change is likely to be slow.

3. Although progress has been made in both print and broadcast media, still more positive imaging of women is needed to counter the negative images which are degrading or detrimental to women and which encourage violence to women:

- Exploitation of women
- Sexual images
- Portrayal as victims
- Portrayal of overt violence against women
- Girls highly sexualized even well before puberty.

Continual repetition of these aspects, and in particular "on-screen violence", leads to "normalization" and acceptance of negative attitudes and stereotypes.

In addition, a relative absence of the portrayal of women in roles of authority and power exercised across a whole range of activities and not only as the childbearers and major nurturers also prevents both men and women from accepting the normality of women as equals with men.

4. New information technologies, such as the World Wide Web, have made a positive impact and provided an opportunity to empower all members of society. Freedom of information should be regarded as a right and no State should deny its citizens freedom to access information through this medium.

5. Where they do have access to the Web, the ability of women cannot be ignored. They have:

- Created and sustained information networks
- Created web-based commercial opportunities
- Communicated news
- Expanded their information and knowledge base
- Contributed to the economy
- Found ways to help one another and to be helped when exposed to violence
- Enabled work without travel and at lower expense

6. For these new technologies to be effective for women in their advancement, access must be ensured and enabling strategies developed. Frequently, women's access is marginalized by:

- Poverty and poverty of information
- Lack of education
- Computer illiteracy
- Lack of resources, including lack of a telephone line
- General inaccessibility
- Gender inequality.

7. The use of new information technologies has brought new problems with respect to the exploitation and trafficking of women, and pornography. It is deplorable that many of the successful and profitable web sites on the World Wide Web are of a pornographic nature. This is profoundly dangerous and detrimental to women and children, especially to the girl child, and has far-reaching consequences for society. Sustained action must be taken to put in place legislation affecting and regulating pornography.

8. In many areas of the world women experience poverty of information recognized as a major barrier to empowerment and development opportunities — this in a world which, in developed areas, is overwhelmed by excessive information and a constant flow of entertainment. For the empowerment of women everywhere to be realized, examples of good practice need to be shared so that all women can participate fully in the technology which has so much to offer for the advancement of women.

9. NAWO notes that the dangers and problems apparent in the new and emerging information technologies are, as is violence against women, a result of the historically unequal power relations between women and men (Beijing Platform for Action).[1] NAWO urges the full and public recognition of this fact and deplores the tendency to ascribe blame to families or to women themselves for the problems of violence, whether in the media or in the everyday world.

10. NAWO welcomes the fact that the United Nations provided great leadership in the passage of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to alter this historical pattern. It urges Governments and the United Nations to implement that resolution so that the media will reflect women leading in the prevention of war and the resolution of conflict.

11. NAWO further calls upon Governments to put in place effective legal and judicial systems, programmes and imaginative strategies, collect the necessary disaggregated statistics and monitor the results, and to ensure that findings and discussion in the Commission on the Status of Women are taken to all other relevant United Nations arenas and implemented in line with agreed goals to mainstream gender across the United Nations system.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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Statement submitted by Franciscans International and Zonta International, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Elizabeth Seton Federation, International Presentation Association Sisters of the Presentation, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc., School Sisters of Notre Dame, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

Prevention strategies to combat trafficking of women

Trafficking is defined as the moving of people away from their normal environment in order to exploit them. The overwhelming majority of trafficked persons are girls/women. Most of the time, they are recruited for sexual exploitation in systems of prostitution. Trafficking violates the fundamental human rights of

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persons. Members of our non-governmental organizations (NGOs) want to see an end to this exploitative and abusive treatment of women.

Facts to consider

1. Trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution is one of the fastest growing areas of international criminal activity. Over 1,200,000 persons (the number may be as high as 4 million), especially women and children, are trafficked each year across international borders (Communication made by Carol Smolenski, ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children), New York, 3 October 2002).

2. Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits all forms of slavery.

3. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, through its supplementary Protocol, deals especially with preventing, suppressing and punishing trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Unfortunately, some States seem to lack the political will to implement this protocol effectively. Commenting on the resolution against trafficking adopted by the General Assembly in December 2000, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recommends that further actions be taken for the adoption and enforcement of legal strategies.

4. Article 6 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women obligates all States to take all measures, including legislation, to suppress the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The measures taken by various Governments are insufficient to curb this criminal activity. It is estimated that as many as 300,000 Bangladeshi children have been trafficked to brothels in India (UNICEF, 2001, "A Reference Kit on Violence Against Women and Girls in South Asia", p. 27).

Positive initiatives

- Many Governments have passed Acts for the prevention and suppression of the trafficking in women and children. In Thailand, for example, girls are now protected under the purview of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Women and Children Act, 1996.

- Several NGOs have set up programmes to rescue, repatriate and reintegrate the victims of trafficking. Examples of these include Maiti Nepal in Nepal, Sanlaap in Calcutta, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Thailand, and others.

Effective strategies to combat trafficking

To be successful, strategies to combat trafficking of women must:

- **Address gender inequality as the root cause of violence and trafficking.** Persistent and pervasive societal discrimination against women is the cause of their lack of access and control over economic, social and political resources. Women are discriminated against in the areas of education, employment, equitable pay during gainful work, equal representation, access to information, decision-making positions, etc.

- **Use new approaches that rely on more comprehensive and inclusive networks and partnerships.** Government is a key player in any prevention

strategy. More attention should be given to the inclusion of NGOs and of initiatives from local communities when these have involved the participation of local leaders.

1. Suggestions for achievable community-level programmes that will prevent trafficking

Based on our knowledge and field experience as NGOs, we wish to offer suggestions on how projects involving local communities could become an effective component of the fight against trafficking.

In trafficking-prone areas, community-level prevention programmes could be organized for the purpose of detecting and preventing the early disappearance of girls. The coordination and organizational responsibilities could be taken on by reputable and dedicated NGOs. Such programmes could have the following components:

- A vigilance committee functioning at the village level to target trafficking agents. Such committees would be comprised of the village/community headperson/mayor, local women and men volunteers (young as well as more experienced persons), the local police, local religious leader, etc.
- A local registry system where the names of missing girls are reported, along with all pertinent details.
- An investigation team whose responsibility would be to screen "job recruiters" or other newcomers entering the village to detect if they might be recruiters for prostitution. The job recruiters would be asked to provide the girl's future employer's name, address and telephone number. He would be asked to give references on the potential employer, which the investigation team would countercheck.
- The vigilance committee would follow-up on the girl's living and working conditions (carpet factory, domestic work, etc.)
- Girls groups could be formed, whenever possible, for the purpose of building their confidence and self-esteem and to give them a better understanding of the various forms of gender violence.
- Poverty eradication measures should be organized at the village level: literacy programme, training for small-scale enterprises, etc.
- Media strategies should be developed to denounce culturally upheld beliefs and practices of violence against women, including domestic violence, female genital mutilation, female foeticide and systems of prostitution.
- Community education and advocacy programmes should be designed for and directed to both genders in the community. These could cover issues such as gender discrimination, violence against women, the dangers of HIV/AIDS, the value of women and their resourcefulness for the community.
- Special recognition awards could be given by regional authorities to model villages/communities which have an active and effective anti-violence project.

2. Early systemic alerts

Rescued girls have stated how they would have appreciated an early intervention by the police and NGOs at the place where they were sold or forced into prostitution. Existing networks between the pimps, brothel owners and the police needs to be dealt with for successful rescue operations. There is an urgent need to establish/strengthen mechanisms for cooperation between the source, transit and destination countries or states where women are trafficked. To be more specific, this should include:

- Effective vigilance at border crossings
- Strict checking of identification papers
- Greater cooperation between the supplying and host countries for the purpose of prevention and rescue
- Anti-corruption initiatives
- Prosecution of sex tourism and of "mail bride" industries.

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Statement submitted by Zonta International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council; American Psychological Association, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, International Association of Schools of Social Work, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, World Federation for Mental Health, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

We, the members of the non-governmental organization (NGO) Committee on Mental Health, international and national NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, enthusiastically endorse addressing the two thematic issues of the 2003 forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

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(1) participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women, and (2) women's human rights and the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as defined in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

The mission of the NGO Committee on Mental Health is the promotion of psychosocial well-being, the improvement of mental health-care services and advocacy and education in the prevention of mental illness. The Committee works with the United Nations and its specialized agencies to ensure the inclusion of mental health issues within a broader context of concerns such as vulnerable populations, human rights, poverty, violence, the environment, peace and well-being.

A gender perspective on mental health and human rights is informed by the fact that women are at the highest risk throughout the world, in large measure owing to second-class status, systemic discrimination and harmful traditional practices that institutionalize such oppression.

Violence against women, in all its forms, both private and public, has long been a devastating manifestation of this denial of basic human rights that precludes full human development and well-being.

The media exacerbate discriminatory stereotypes by the dehumanizing objectification of females, as well as by sensationalizing and eroticizing violence that normalizes and legitimates such abuses. We call upon the media to use their enormous power to shape minds more responsibly and equitably by educating the populace with an increased awareness of gender equity issues that are prerequisites of human rights, human development and sound mental health.

We support and call upon the United Nations, its Member States, this important Commission and NGOs actively to promote and facilitate critical actions in the international arena that improve the status of women, empowering them to their rightful, fullest human potential.

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Statement submitted by the International Council of Jewish Women, the International Federation for Home Economics, the International Federation of University Women and the League of Women Voters of the United States, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* * *

In 1995 girls won their place on the Beijing agenda in section I. of the Platform for Action. Section I. makes a significant pledge to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child, specifically addressing education, violence, economic exploitation and harmful cultural attitudes and practices. It promises to strengthen families and to promote girls' awareness and participation in their own lives and in their societies. Its very existence acknowledges that women's advancement is not sustainable without attention to the rights of girls.

Even previously, in 1994, the Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development declared that the human rights of women and the girl child were an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

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Still nothing significant has happened to improve the situation of girls. While we must acknowledge some minimal positive action, the situation of girls has often worsened. Participants in the five-year reviews of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women felt it necessary to reiterate their commitment to action on behalf of girls.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines childhood as birth to 18 years of age, for girls and boys alike. While it is commonly accepted that education to eliminate illiteracy is the most effective means of propelling girls out of poverty and helping them to realize their full potential, developing commonly awareness of problems unique to girls is equally important. For example:

- An increasing number of girls are being infected by HIV/AIDS. In some areas the rates are five times higher than among boys. Given girls' low economic and social status, too often they are vulnerable to unwanted sexual activity and lack access to accurate and adolescent-friendly reproductive health information.

- Gender-based exploitation and violence continue unabated. In stark contrast, the majority of child abuse victims are girls. This includes domestic violence, prostitution, female genital mutilation and unregulated domestic labour.

- The overall health of girls is jeopardized by poor nutrition and more limited access to health care, which leads to stunted growth and nutritional deficiencies such as anaemia. Immunization rates fall far below those of boys.

The picture is disheartening. Between 60 million and 100 million females are missing from the world's population, as victims of gender-based foeticide, infanticide, malnutrition and neglect. Fifteen million girls aged 15 to 19 years old give birth each year, and 64 million girls of primary-school age are not in school. Nearly half of all sexual assaults are committed against girls 15 years and younger, and more than a million of the estimated 10.5 million young people infected with HIV/AIDS are girls.

It is important for us to remember that there are no women's rights without girls' rights and no possible chance for improvement of girls' rights without the diligent efforts of women and men throughout the world.